

All four participants have reported a dramatic increase of collections for Medicare and Medicaid services, which provided additional revenues for IHS programs at these facilities. In addition, there has been a significant reduction in the turn-around time between billing and receipt of payment and an increase in efficiency by being able to track their own billings and collections in order to act quickly to resolve questions and problems.

On behalf of my constituents, the Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation and the South East Area Regional Health Corporation, I am introducing this legislation to provide permanent status for the demonstration program established by Section 405 of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act, to provide a "grandfather" clause for the current four demonstration participants to enable them to continue their programs without interruption, and to expand eligibility for the program to tribes or tribal organizations who operated or are served by an IHS hospital or clinic.

**ALASKA NATIVE AND AMERICAN
INDIAN DIRECT REIMBURSE-
MENT ACT OF 1998**

HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 18, 1998

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to urge my colleagues to support legislation I am introducing today with Resources Committee Chairman YOUNG that would permanently authorize and expand the Medicare and Medicaid direct collections demonstration program under section 405 of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act.

The Medicare and Medicaid direct collections demonstration program currently allows four tribal health care operators who operate an entire Indian Health Service hospital or clinic to bill directly and collect Medicare and Medicaid reimbursements instead of having to deal with the bureaucracy at the Indian Health Service. The current participants are the Bristol Bay Health Corporation and the Southeast Regional Health Corporation in Alaska, the Mississippi Choctaw Health Center, and the Choctaw Tribe of Oklahoma.

The demonstration program has been fully tested over the past decade. All of the participants—and the Department of Health and Human Services—report that the program is a great success. In fact, the program has: Significantly reduced the turnaround time between billing and the receipt of payment for Medicare and Medicaid services; increased the administrative efficiency of the participating facilities by empowering them to track their own Medicare and Medicaid billings and collections; and improved collections for Medicare and Medicaid services, which in turn have provided badly-needed revenues for Indian and Alaska Native health care.

In 1996, when the demonstration program was about to expire, Congress extended it through fiscal year 1998. This extension has allowed the participants to continue their direct billing and collection efforts and has given Congress additional time to consider whether to authorize the program permanently.

Because the demonstration program is again set to expire on September 30, Con-

gress must act quickly to recognize the benefits of the demonstration program by enacting legislation that simply would permanently authorize it and expand it to other eligible tribal participants.

The Alaska Native and American Indian Direct Reimbursement Act of 1998 is an identical companion bill to legislation introduced in the Senate on April 29 and sponsored by Senators MURKOWSKI, LOTT, BAUCUS, and INHOFE. The Indian Health Service and the Health Care Financing Administration support it.

I hope that my colleagues also will support this important legislation and that the Resources Committee and this House will favorably consider it as soon as possible so this successful program can continue to increase the administrative efficiency of participating Alaska native and American Indian health care facilities.

**HONORING AUDIOVOX AND TO-
SHIBA: A VERY SPECIAL RELA-
TIONSHIP**

HON. GARY L. ACKERMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 18, 1998

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a very special and unique relationship between the well-known Japanese company, Toshiba, and a great American company based on Long Island, Audiovox Corporation. For the last 14 years they have shared an incredible partnership in cellular phone manufacturing and distribution, which has led to this day, during which we are marking the 7 millionth cellular phone that has derived from this very special relationship. In fact, I have taken the liberty of proclaiming this day, "Audiovox-Toshiba Day" in the 5th District of New York.

At a ceremony today at Audiovox's headquarters in the town of Hapauge in Suffolk County on Long Island, Toshiba will be presenting a gold phone to mark this remarkable milestone. Mr. Takao Kishida, General Manager of the Mobile Communications Division of Toshiba and Mr. Kunio Horiouchi, Department Manager of the division, will be presenting the phone on behalf of Pizo Nishimuro, President of Toshiba. Accepting this unique award on behalf of Audiovox will be two very good close friends of mine, Phillip Christopher, President and CEO of Audiovox Communications Corporation (ACC), and John J. Shalam, Chairman of Audiovox.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned before, the nature of the relationship has been Toshiba manufacturing the phones and Audiovox marketing them in North America. I'm sure my colleagues realize that there are countless numbers of companies in the world who manufacture cellular phones. However, over half of the phones that Audiovox has sold over the course of almost 15 years have come from Toshiba's production line, and, Audiovox officials do not hesitate for one minute to say that Toshiba is the best—based on their quality, their integrity and character, and their loyalty to this special relationship. That's why I think it's so important to highlight this special relationship as an example of what can come of the very special bond that has existed over the past 50 years between the United States

and Japan. Regardless of the differences we may encounter in our general trade relationship, I wanted to take a moment to recognize the unique partnership between Toshiba and Audiovox, and the remarkable achievements that they have reached together. This is an exemplary union that should be held up to the highest regard, to demonstrate to others the opportunities that exist between our countries and to encourage other companies to engage in similar ventures.

Trade is so very much a critical component of U.S. policy, particularly in this day and age as we become more of a global village. Mr. Speaker and my colleagues, please join with me today as we honor two truly energetic and viable companies who have chosen to engage in a partnership that has only served to complement each companies' strengths as well as continuing to highlight the special bond between the U.S. and Japan.

A TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL J. KANE

HON. RICHARD E. NEAL

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 18, 1998

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, writing of Sir Thomas More, Robert Whittinton observed that he was "a man for all seasons." As I pay tribute today to my good friend, Michael Kane, on the occasion of his retirement from the Monson Public Schools system, the same sentiment comes to mind.

Though words cannot fairly describe Mike Kane's philanthropic approach to life, I would like to detail some of the ways in which he has put his talents to use to serve others. Mike Kane began his career as a Science and Mathematics Teacher at South Main Street School in Monson. He went on to be Vice Principal of Monson Junior-Senior High School and later Principal of that same school. Totaling 37 years, Mike's career was built around a most noble pursuit—the education of our youth.

While committed to instilling the importance of academic pursuits in the young minds that he has reached, Mike Kane has also consistently stressed in his teaching and by example the unique role that athletic challenges play in one's development. Mike's years as high school Baseball and Girl's Basketball coach as well as his involvement and leadership with the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association Basketball Tournament Committee and Sectional Seeding Committee for more than 25 years epitomizes this deeply held belief.

In addition to his dedication to these endeavors, Mike Kane has also been seriously involved with the National Foundation of the March of Dimes. In both the Monson and Pioneer Valley chapters of this organization, Mike has served as Chairman during his tenure of membership and has also been on the Pioneer Valley's Board of Directors. Donating his time to such a worthy cause offers further testament to the quality of Mike Kane's character.

An active member of the Massachusetts Teachers' Association and the National Education Association, Mike Kane has brought to the forefront of state and national organizations the same innovative ideas that he has shared with students, teachers, and administrators in Monson for 37 years.